IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A reinforced rigid anode monolith and fuel produced by the process comprising:

providing a solution of organic aerogel or xerogel precursors including at least one of a phenolic resin, phenol (hydroxybenzene), resorcinol (1, 3-dihydroxybenzene), or catechol (1, 2-dihydroxybenzene) [and]; at least one aldehyde compound selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and furfuraldehyde[,] ; and a pyrolysis-accelerating amount of transition metal oxide catalyst;

adding internal reinforcement materials selected from (1) ceramic materials; (2) glassy materials based on borates, phosphates, or silicates with alkaline earth or transition metal cations; and/or (3) carbon materials to said precursor solution to form a precursor mixture;

gelling said precursor mixture to form a composite gel;

drying said composite gel; and

pyrolyzing said composite gel to form [an] a wettable aerogel/carbon composite or a wettable xerogel/carbon composite wherein said composites comprise chars and said internal reinforcement materials, and said chars are capable of being combusted in a molten salt electrochemical fuel cell in the range from 500 C to 800 C to produce electrical energy.

2. (Currently amended) The ~~carbon anode~~ monolith recited in claim 1, wherein said drying is accomplished by supercritical-critical solvent extraction.

3. (Currently amended) The ~~carbon anode~~ monolith recited in claim 1, wherein said drying is accomplished by air drying.

4. (Currently amended) The ~~carbon anode~~ monolith recited in claim 1, wherein said ceramic materials are selected from the group consisting of silica, alumino-silicates, and ash derived from coal or petroleum clays.

5. (Currently amended) The ~~carbon anode~~ monolith recited in claim 1, wherein said carbon materials are selected from the group consisting of carbon fibers, carbon paper, carbon rods, carbon fabrics, carbon screens, graphite or highly graphitized carbon structures.

6. (Cancelled) The use of ~~a~~ said aerogel/carbon composite of claim 1 as the carbon anode in a molten electrolyte fuel cell or battery.

7. (Cancelled) The use recited in claim 6, wherein the aerogel component is phenol-based, resorcinol-based, or catechol-based.

8. (Cancelled) The use of ~~a~~ said xerogel/carbon composite of claim 1 as the carbon anode in a molten electrolyte fuel cell or battery.

9. (Cancelled) The use recited in claim 8, wherein the xerogel component is phenol-based, resorcinol-based, or catechol-based.

10. (Cancelled) The use of a pyrolyzed aerogel as the carbon anode in a molten electrolyte fuel cell or battery.

11. (Cancelled) The use of a pyrolyzed xerogel as the carbon anode in a molten electrolyte fuel cell or battery.

Add the following new claims:

12. (New) The monolith recited in claim 1 wherein said composites have a density of at least 0.56 grams/cm3.

13. (New) The monolith recited in claim 5 wherein said carbon materials comprise graphite.

14. (New) The monolith recited in claim 1 wherein said transition metal oxide catalyst is selected from the group consisting of alkali carbonate, alkaline earth carbonate or phosphoric acid, halide salts, and salts based on sodium aluminum hexafluoride.

15. (New) A reinforced rigid anode monolith and fuel produced by the process comprising:

providing a solution of organic aerogel or xerogel precursors including at least one of a phenolic resin, phenol (hydroxybenzene), resorcinol (1, 3-dihydroxybenzene), or catechol (1, 2-dihydroxybenzene); at least one aldehyde compound selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and furfuraldehyde; and a pyrolysis-accelerating amount of alkali carbonate or phosphoric acid catalyst;

adding internal reinforcement materials comprising carbon to said precursor solution to form a precursor mixture;

gelling said precursor mixture to form a composite gel;

drying said composite gel; and

pyrolyzing said composite gel to form a wettable aerogel/carbon composite or a wettable xerogel/carbon composite wherein said composites comprise chars and said internal reinforcement materials, and said chars are capable of being combusted in a molten salt electrochemical fuel cell in the range from 500 C to 800 C to produce electrical energy.

16. (New) The monolith recited in claim 15 wherein a mole ratio of said phenolic resin, resorcinol or catechol to said catalyst is less than about 50 to 1.

17. (New) The monolith recited in claim 15 wherein a mole ratio of said resorcinol to said catalyst is less than or about 50 to 1.

18. (New) The monolith recited in claim 15 wherein said composites have a density of at least 0.56 grams/cm3.

19. (New) The monolith recited in claim 15 wherein said internal reinforcement materials comprise graphite.

20. (New) The monolith recited in claim 15 wherein said wettable xerogel/carbon composite has a porosity that prevents percolation of carbon dioxide through its interior.